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DE RUEHBW #1973/01 3401356  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 061356Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9851  
INFO RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA IMMEDIATE 3608  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1264  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RXFEAA/JFC NAPLES IMMEDIATE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BELGRADE 001973

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E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [SR](#)

SUBJECT: More Reaction from Democrats and NGOs on Pfp

REF: A)Belgrade 1956; B)Belgrade 1943

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) NATO's invitation for Serbia's membership in Pfp continues to dominate local media. President Tadic gave credit to his advisors for the invitation, a statement to which FONMIN took offense. The EU, meanwhile, has said publicly that NATO's relaxation on conditionality will not change its firm position that Serbia increase its cooperation with the ICTY before reopening the SAA talks. Human rights organizations are split over the NATO invitation, with some of the more crusading organizations supporting ICTY Prosecutor del Ponte's criticism of the decision. The small, pro-Western LDP has come out in favor of membership, but also warns of the responsibility that comes with Pfp. The ball is now in Serbia's court, and we will continue to urge them to move quickly during this campaign season to initiate the Pfp membership process.  
End Summary.

LDP Welcomes Pfp Invitation  
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¶3. (SBU) The small, pro-Western LDP released a statement on November 30 welcoming Serbia's membership in Pfp, calling it great news for the country. However, the LDP acknowledged the great responsibility now bestowed on Serbia and the standards it must now achieve, including fulfilling obligations to ICTY, dealing with the Kosovo status issue, and aligning with European standards with regard to the judiciary and security forces. The LDP said of this new opportunity, "We must not gamble that away."

NGO's Support Pfp  
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¶4. (SBU) After some initial rumblings of dismay, the NGO community largely welcomed NATO's invitation to Serbia to join Pfp. Six major humanitarian NG's in Serbia, the Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade Circle, the Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights, the Youth Initiative, the Civic Initiative, and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, released a joint statement in support of the decision. Two other groups -- Women in Black and the Humanitarian Law Center -- while

sympathetic to the statement, opted to support ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte's public criticism of NATO for relaxing its conditionality policy. The six NGOs assessed that Serbia's inclusion into PfP is of crucial importance for the region's lasting stability and will help in the reform of the army and placing it under civilian control. These six NGOs also stated that they hope PfP will restore trust among nations in the Balkans and combating extreme nationalism still plaguing Serbia. The six NGOs asserted that collective regional security calls for resolving all open issues, including Kosovo and ICTY.

#### Tadic and Draskovic Tangle Over Credit for PfP

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15. (SBU) President Tadic continued his public comments in support of what the media has characterized as a last minute reversal in favor of engagement, praising his young advisors, Vuk Jeremic and Jovan Ratkovic, for bringing PfP to Serbia. The media is reporting widely A/S Fried's statements that Tadic's letter to President Bush--asking for Serbia's inclusion into PfP--was an important factor in favor of PfP membership for Serbia. FONMIN Draskovic and the Foreign Ministry issued a statement criticizing Tadic for giving credit to his two advisors and accusing the Presidency of thereby belittling the state and the institutions of Serbia and NATO-member countries. Draskovic, who has been spearheading the effort to get Serbia into PfP for the last couple of years, complained to the Ambassador that he thought the DS and Tadic were taking all the credit for PfP. All bickering aside, most democratic forces have welcomed PfP as a rallying cry for moving Serbia forward into Euro-Atlantic institutions as well as in their campaign strategies. There is still no

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substantive response from the Radical (SRS) or Socialist (SPS) parties. The PM's DSS is still clinging to its tepid welcoming of PfP and its interpretation that it advances Serbia's claim on Kosovo and that it proves the error of conditionality as a policy.

#### EU Remains Committed to Conditionality

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16. (SBU) The EU remains firm in its position to force Serbia to comply fully with ICTY, according to press statements and initial Embassy contacts with Belgrade-based EU officials. Belgrade media covered statements by German Chancellor Merkel and EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn that the EU will not abandon its condition of full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal before resuming talks on SAA with Serbia. Commending Serbia for the progress made so far in moving closer to the west, Rehn promised that the EU is prepared to resume talks the moment Serbia fully cooperates with the Hague, i.e. arrests and extradites indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic to the Hague. Our EU contacts affirmed this, saying that member states remained concerned about Serbia's lack of commitment to the Hague and will continue to make clear that full cooperation is necessary for negotiations to resume.

#### Comment

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17. (SBU) After the fanfare of the PFP announcement, NATO and the Serbian government are wasting no time moving from an invitation to membership for Serbia. Serbian Ambassador to NATO Milinkovic announced that Serbia may sign the framework partnership agreement by the end of the year. Following the agreement, a presentation document will be delivered that will offer a program of cooperation between Serbia and NATO before an individual program of partnership between Serbia and NATO is developed. Milinkovic expects Serbia to complete this process by mid-2007. The Ministry of Defense has also issued invitations for the opening of a

NATO Military Liaison Office on December 18.

18. (SBU) There is little popular understanding in Serbia about the details of PfP membership, which is popularly considered as something positive but "not NATO." For now, at least some of the democratic forces, despite bickering over who is responsible for the invitation will probably use PfP as a campaign message to the voters for the elections. Hopefully, they can present NATO's invitation as a way of reinforcing the distinction between the hateful backward looking message of the Radicals, and the largely pro-Euro-Atlantic themes that democratic parties are pushing in their parliamentary campaigns.

19. (SBU) We will continue to push the government to move forward quickly on membership and to use accession as a way to trumpet its commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration. The Serbian Ambassador to NATO expressed hope that Serbia could sign the Framework Document by the end of the year and submit a PD by mid-2007. We will need to see whether the GoS is indeed willing to move that quickly during this campaign season. In the meantime, the Ministry of Defense has also issued invitations for the opening of a NATO Military Liaison Office on December 18.

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